Some Reflections

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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

[The A. I. C. C. passed the following resolution on the South African Situation at its last Calcutta session :]

The All India Congress Committee deeply regrets that the Union Government of South Africa have rejected the direction of the General Assembly of the United Nations regarding the steps to be taken to settle the problem of persons of Indian origin in South Africa, and have continued to implement ruthlessly its policy of Apartheid. Both in the administrative and legislative spheres fresh disabilities, hardships and indignities have been imposed on the non-white population of the Union, including Indians. For many years past, the Government of India have endeavoured to find an honourable way for a settlement of this problem in South Africa. All these attempts have, however, failed because of the attitude of the South African Union Government which has consistently ignored the decisions of the United Nations. The Group Areas Act introduces complete segregation in the whole of the Union and envisages the uprooting of thousands of non-whites, particularly Indians from their settled localities. Its chief aim is the liquidation of the Indian community in South Africa. Other legislation is also based on racial discrimination and the domination of a relatively small racial minority at the cost of the great majority of the population of the country.

2. The policy of the South African Government is a challenge to, and a defiance of, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles governing Human Rights which the United Nations have laid down. The Government and the people of India can never accept any policy based on racial discrimination. They have endeavoured and will continue to endeavour to find a peaceful settlement in consonance with the basic principles for which they stand and on which the United Nations Organization has been built up. Defiance of these principles must lead to racial conflict on a vast scale.

3. The A.I.C.C. welcomes the decision of the Supreme Court of South Africa declaring the South African Government's Act placing coloured voters in a separate electoral roll to be invalid. The Committee trusts that the South African Union Government, will, in view of this high judicial decision, put an end to their policy of segregation.

4. The A.I.C.C. expresses its full sympathy with the people of Africa who suffer under degrading and discriminatory racial laws and whose progress is impeded by administrative and other measures. The Committee welcomes the co-operation of Africans and Indians in not submitting to such legislative and administrative measures which condemn them to servitude. The Committee, however, trusts that both the Indians and Africans will pursue peaceful and non-violent methods.

5. The Committee is of opinion that the interests of the Africans must have first place in Africa and Indians must not in any way associate themselves with the exploitation of Africans or seek any privilege at the cost of the Africans.

(From *Hitavada*, Nagpur, 23-3-'52)

MANURE COMPOSTING AND GAS

For some time past, manure composting and gas plants have been attracting the attention of agriculturists and village industry workers. One of the advantages claimed for this process is that "no unpleasant odour develops, nor do flies, rats or other pests and vermin display any interest in the compost."

This is attractive. But it seems to me that it may as well be indicative of danger. If flies, rats etc. and this odourless manure are made to live together, how would it affect the life and multiplication of these creatures? It is important to know this. For, "flies, rats, or other pests and vermin" are not the only creatures that thrive on refuse. There are other tiny creatures, perhaps, of innumerable types, which also live and thrive on them, and which are of immense importance to vegetable life and increase the nutritional value of vegetable food. Do these creatures also eschew the odourless residue of the plants? If so there might be something unhealthy or even poisonous in it. Man dislikes the odour of manure and night-soil — so very attractive and alluring to flies and rats. But flies do not flock to the heap merely to enjoy its odour like human being visiting flower gardens. The odour is their test of its suitability for food. Is it not possible that the residuary substance is like polished rice, edible but

deprived of some very important nourishing elements? Scientists should clear this doubt.

Wardha, 10-3-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

HIS TECHNIQUE AND ACHIEVEMENT

(*By Pyarelal*)

II — Training of Leaders

THE FIRST PERIOD CONTINUED

Here, in Bihar were the old leaders — Rajendra Babu, a rising legal luminary, Acharya Kripalani, the ardent revolutionary and others. They had tried and exhausted all constitutional methods. Terrorism they had renounced as, among other reasons, it had proved ineffectual. They were faced by a blank wall. The hiatus between the leadership of thought and leadership in action was complete — unbridgeable. There was no common denominator of what they could plan and what the people could execute. The result was deep frustration. Gandhiji came to them with the evangel of action. It filled them with a new sense of hope. As the first thing, he made the leaders transform themselves into servants. He made the irrepressible Acharya forget his professorship and assigned to him the duty of a peon and a *durwan*, and when the Acharya could not quite master his pugilistic temperament, sent him to work in the kitchen to cook! At his bidding, other leaders, the cream of the legal profession in Bihar, turned themselves into clerks — mute workers. He made them clean their dishes and wash their clothes — which they had never done in their lives before and which they had hitherto regarded as tasks fit only for menials to perform. He thereby made them realize their identity with the toiling masses in however limited a manner and prepared their minds to think in terms of the mental capacity and daily experience of the common folk, which is the basic preparation for any mass movement. He sent forth the women of his Ashram, untrained and uneducated as these expressions are commonly understood — headed by his wife Kasturba Gandhi, who was almost illiterate — to minister to the men and women in Bihar's villages. He provided them with only three drugs — quinine, castor oil and sulphur ointment. Their other equipment consisted of the basic disciplines to which he had introduced them in his Ashram and which enabled them to move about freely and fearlessly in remote villages among utter strangers and to find interest and inspiration in ministering to them in the humble way without feeling jaded or fagged. They set up a school at Motihari and became school masters!

"But what shall I teach them, I myself know next to nothing?" asked an elderly sister.

"You teach them history," suggested Gandhiji quietly.

"That would be fine," replied the lady. "But don't you see, I know nothing of history myself? How can I teach it to others?"

"But you have seen the world for fifty years," rejoined Gandhiji. "Who could be a fitter person than you to teach history? You tell them what you have seen of the world in your lifetime."

She became a teacher of history forthwith!

This was the basic education needed in the villages, not the history of England or of the various dynasties and Governors General of India.

These simple-minded, unsophisticated workers gave to thousands the relief they needed but which nobody ever gave or thought of giving to them. They carried to them the message of literacy, industry, health, cleanliness and sanitation. They emancipated the women from *purdah* and instilled into them some of their faith and courage. Before long the whole country-side boiled over. There was hope and enthusiasm where there was only blank despair before.

B. THE SECOND PERIOD, 1919 TO 1933

Non-co-operation Movement

The second period (1919-1933) of his life may be said to have opened with the agitation against the Rowlatt Act. On the sixth of April, 1919, mass Satyagraha on nationwide scale in India was born. It was observed by fasting, prayer and abstention from normal work — things within the mental reach and capacity of every man, woman and child of India. It taught the common people to say 'No' when they meant 'No'. When an entire people learns to say 'No' in a disciplined manner, no power on earth can hold them in bondage. But this could be possible only under non-violence. Gandhiji for the first time taught the country the secret of its power. The result was a surprise even to the author of the movement. It exceeded all expectations. It evoked a response even in the remotest hamlets in the interior — beyond the reach of the courier, the post office or the telegraph. It showed that there was something in the technique and the programme presented which gave expression to some hitherto unrecognized, deep buried impulse in the hearts and consciousness of the people. The people discovered themselves and their latent inherent strength.

The people realized their power. But they had yet to learn the conditions that govern that power. And a bitter lesson it proved to be. In places people went mad, and at Amritsar had to pay for it on the 13th of April in the tragedy of the Jallianwalla Bagh. It was, however, found that where the people had lost their senses and indulged in acts of violence, as in certain parts of Gujarat, repression produced depression. But where innocent blood had been shed by the Government, the people came out purified and strengthened from the ordeal.

The non-co-operation movement that followed in its wake marked a further stage in the development of the technique of organized, non-violent resistance. The picture that confronted Gandhiji was that of a nation of three hundred

millions, lying prostrate at the feet of an alien imperial power, which had used the arm of "political injustice" to crush the indigenous crafts and industries of the people, and was draining it of its wealth by exploiting its raw materials to feed its own industry. The vast bulk of the Indian masses were condemned to forced unemployment and idleness during the greater part of the year.

The humiliation of the political subjection of his country went deep into Gandhiji's soul. He denounced it as Satanic. Behind his indignant revolt was his deep moral earnestness which was outraged by the spectacle of the utter demoralization of three hundred millions who dared not speak what they felt, whose cowardly existence had become a living lie and a denial of God under the incubus of foreign rule. Not a little of the power that characterized his writings and utterances at that time, and which fired the country from one end to the other, had its root in his impassioned devotion to truth and the importance he attached to moral freedom.

If the people refused to be parties, willing or forced, to their own exploitation and enslavement, the evil of foreign rule could not continue for a day longer, argued Gandhiji. Evil by itself, he said, is sterile; it exists and flourishes through the implication of good in it. If all good people ceased completely to co-operate with an unjust and tyrannous system of rule, it must collapse under the weight of its own unadulterated iniquity. We all remember how in the *Geeta*, Lord Krishna, in the vision of the cosmic form — विश्वरूपदर्शन — shows to Arjuna, Duryodhana and the other Kauravas as self-destroyed — destroyed by their own evil: कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धः He says: "I am *a priori* Time, seated in *a priori* space." And in Shelley's *Promethens Unbound*, Zeus, the principal of evil, is dethroned, not by any form of force; it topples down by its own weight. It is dethroned by Chronos — which again is the same thing as "*a priori* Time, seated in *a priori* space."

But the difficulty is that we want to overthrow evil but are not prepared to renounce personal benefits that accrue to us from it. We co-operate with the evil principle by ourselves imitating what we condemn in the adversary, and that sustains the evil we want to overthrow.

Out of this reasoning developed the programme of the triple boycott of councils, law courts and governmental or government-aided educational institutions, boycott of all mill-made cloth, whether foreign or indigenous, renunciation of titles and, finally, non-payment of taxes. The spell that had hypnotized the people — particularly the intelligentsia, so that they hugged the very chains that enslaved them — needed to be broken. The triple-boycott was the means.

But non-co-operation with the government must mean co-operation amongst all the sections of the people — the rich and the poor — caste and outcaste, Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Christian and Sikh. It included universalization of spinning and *khadi*, as the bond uniting the rich with the poor; communal unity, removal of untouchability, enrolment of volunteers and collection of funds to work out the new programme. This was the positive aspect of the programme of non-violent non-co-operation of which the various boycotts were the negative aspect.

(To be continued)

ABOUT THE 'HARIJAN'

As the reader knows, it has been decided by the Navajivan Trust to continue this paper for six months more during which period it is expected that the subscribers will so increase as to remove the large deficit that the Trust has to suffer at present. Various inquiries are made about the actual charges that the paper has to meet. The following information will answer such queries.

The number of subscribers (by post or through agents) on 28-2-'52 is 2840. About three hundred more are printed for exchange, presentation etc.

The actual expenditure per chief heads of expenses is as follows:

Credit		Debit	
Subscribers		Editorial	
2,096 × 6	12,576 0 0	Office	
Agents		expenses	10,380 0 0
744 × 4–14	3,627 0 0	Management	
	16,203 0 0	expenses	4,176 0 0
		Press Bill	16,122 0 0
		Postage,	
Deficit	16,538 0 0	despatch etc.	2,063 0 0
Total	32,741 0 0	Total	32,741 0 0

The reader will see from this that the actual charge per copy is Rs 11.5 which is more than the annual subscription of Rs 6/- by Rs 5.5. To remove the deficit at least 2800 persons should come forth to subscribe during the coming few months. Till now 765 have registered themselves as new subscribers. The Trust hopes that within the next two or three months the necessary target will be reached, enabling the Trust to continue the paper.

Ahmedabad, 27-3-'52

JIVANJI D. DESAI,
Managing Trustee
Navajivan Trust

New Subscribers

The figures of subscribers up till 29th March are as follows:

Harijan Bandhu	..	5,848
Harijan	..	3,647
Harijan Sewak	..	2,958
Total	..	12,453

i.e. a net increase of 3453 since 1st March '52.

J. D.

HARIJAN

April 5 1952

SOME REFLECTIONS

The All-India Congress Committee has met at Calcutta just last week. None may say that Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President suffers from the habit of self-condemnation. But he is also self-introspective and well conscious of the weaknesses in himself and his organizations, and has sufficient frankness to confess them openly. He and Shri Purushottamdas Tandon and a few others made some outspoken speeches at Calcutta for improving and revitalizing the Congress institution. They are anxious that this old institution should attract new blood. When those who are past sixty now joined the Congress, it was not an institution which could gain them places of power and profit, or the favours of government officers. If they had cared for these, many of them had learning and influence enough to get into lucrative government posts. But these had no attraction for them. What they sought was institutions and movements which would give them an opportunity to act in a spirited manner and undergo suffering for the sake of the country. They preferred leaders who would lead them to gallows and prisons, and make them experience privations and poverty, rather than comforts and money. Terrorist and extremist leaders attracted many a youth because of such opportunities in that career. When these movements failed, some turned to ascetic life.

Gandhiji became the hero of the nation, because both through his political and constructive activities, he gave young men and women opportunities to make sacrifices. He adopted the Congress and created many Constructive Institutions. The common feature in all of them was that they required spirited young men and women to enter upon a life of sacrifice to do something new and bold in life. None of Gandhiji's activities, till the end of his life, degenerated into easy life. When institutions become just comfortable establishments carrying on routine work and observance of forms, they cease to attract men of spirit, although they might still be carrying on activities useful to the nation. Spirited men and women have the tendency to join even asocial and positively immoral activities if good institutions do not provide work of sufficient high pitch to satisfy their enthusiasm.

What applies to the Congress applies also to the Constructive Institutions. As long as funds are anyhow available to them, none of them may die for mere want of workers. But it is not any workers and funds that keep an institution live. It is workers with originality, spirit and faith that keep it always fresh, youthful and progressive. For this there has to be a clear goal that calls for acts of courage and self-sacrifice. Sufferings and hardships do not detract young men as they do men of older age. But they do not love sufferings and hardships for their own sake. There must be an object in undergoing them; and the object must be fairly concrete, and worthy of their energies.

The Congress has been often criticized for its internal dissensions and power-politics; for corruption into its ranks and moral degeneration; for its loss of contact with the people, for its departure from Gandhian ideals; for its communalism, provincialism, casteism and so on. Workers in Constructive Institutions have not been less critical of the Congress than the general public and the non-Congress Press. Perhaps a part of the popularity which I have gained as Editor of *Harijan* is due to my share in the criticism of the Congress and the Congress Government.

Just as the Congress leaders turned their eyes towards themselves at Calcutta, it is time that leaders of Constructive Institutions should also do so, when they meet at Sevapuri. Are the Constructive Institutions free from the blemishes for which they criticize the Congress? Have they not their own institutional jealousies and even personal rivalries, and power politics among them? Gandhiji was the common founder or guide of all the Constructive Institutions. Are the relations of all these *inter se* those of goodwill and amity? Is their perfect mutual understanding, respect and friendliness? Do the Constructive workers and Institutions not suffer from the same diseases as the Congress? We condemn imperialism and caste. But, what is imperialism but the ambition of one powerful unit to physically and spiritually devour and control all smaller units? And what is caste but imperialism in rebellion? It is the ambition to carve out a small independent principality from a larger body. We talk of casteless and democratic co-operative societies, but both imperialism and casteism are as much present in us as among those whom we criticize.

I respectfully suggest that we should make some frank self-examination on this solemn occasion.

There are about a dozen or more all-India institutions founded by Gandhiji or dedicated to carry on activities and programmes preached by him. Gandhiji will live well or poorly in ages to come only through institutions working out these programmes. The present leaders of these institutions are co-workers of Gandhiji. There is a great responsibility on them to conduct and develop these institutions in the true Gandhi spirit.

Are the heads of these institutions bound with one another by ties of love and friendliness — a spirit of comradeship? Is each one helpful to others and considers the progress and prestige of another as his own? When they come together do they meet and disperse with deeper and friendlier feelings than before?

Are we, who call ourselves Constructive workers, fired with a common and *non-personal* aim of life? Are we able to forget our own individual position in the institutions through which we work? No doubt, we want various constructive activities to thrive. Each one of us must, therefore, have abundant faith in the constructive programme, and a proper measure of faith in his own self. Faith in oneself, — self-confidence, — is a good and necessary quality. But this faith must not be coupled with the idea that he can succeed only if he is put in authority and all others work under him; that he cannot operate if he has to work under others. When this feeling takes hold of him, though his object is the service of the people and his life is more simple and industrious than that of a man of equal education and ability, he gets heavily loaded with personal ego. An individualist becomes an emperor, if possible, if he cannot do that he creates, in society, a caste, in politics, a kingdom; in religion, a sect. Under modern conditions, he founds a new party, or a new institution.

Having had the privilege of living and working with Bapu and having been loved and honoured by him for a good many years, each one of us feels as being an independent projection of Gandhiji. Our combined egotism makes us feel that the Constructive workers are as an aggregate, a caste superior to Congressmen. But when they are in the midst of their colleagues, each has a different way of thinking, and a rather scant respect for others. The result is that the spirit of brotherhood does not grow.

This defect, I am afraid, might do more harm to the constructive programme than any apathy of the Government or the people.

संगच्छध्वं, संवदध्वं, स वो मनांसि जानताम्।

"March together, Speak together in harmony; Know your minds well" — said the Vedic teacher. This is indispensable for Sarvodaya.

Wardha, 25-3-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

South African Struggle

I wish to draw the attention of readers to the A. I. C. C.'s resolution on South Africa published elsewhere. I think this is a matter on which all political parties of India and Pakistan should pass similar resolutions.

Shri Manilal Gandhi will have completed his three week fast when this reaches the readers. He is extremely anxious that while the segregated communities should offer as strenuous resistance as possible against the Apartheid policy, the struggle must remain absolutely non-violent. There is a great danger of agents of violence leading the simple Africans to commit acts of mob insanity with disastrous consequences to that community itself. Indian politicians of all shades of opinion will do well to support Shri Manilal Gandhi in his attempt to save the movement from violence. I doubt not that they will also support the parties which resist Dr. Malan's attempt to brush aside the Supreme Court's decision against his laws.

Wardha, 27-3-'52 K. G. M.

HUMILITY

When Gandhiji was about to found the Satyagraha Ashram at Ahmedabad, he circulated a preliminary draft of the rules and regulations of the Ashram among a few friends. One of them was the late Sir Gurudas Banerji of Calcutta. He suggested that humility should be accorded a place among the observances. Gandhiji, however, did not accept the suggestion on the ground that "humility cannot be an observance by itself. For it does not lend itself to being deliberately practised." "It is, however," he writes, "an indispensable test of *ahimsa*. In one who has *ahimsa* in him it becomes part of his very nature." He says further, "although humility is not one of the observances, it is certainly as essential as, and perhaps even more essential than, any of them. Only it has never come to any one by practice. Truth can be cultivated as well as love. But to cultivate humility is tantamount to cultivating hypocrisy."

It seems to me that Gandhiji was led to distinguish between truth, love and other observances on the one hand, and humility on the other, because he personally did not have to think of the latter by itself. Humility was as natural to him as his childlike simplicity or the particular shape of his nose and ears. A man is not conscious of his natural qualities. But even as his nose and his ears and simplicity or sophistry grow with him, so too does a natural virtue like humility. A man also develops it by paying attention to it, and by proper introspection. Even an observance of the type of truth, non-violence etc. ceases to grow from stage to stage, if not accompanied with continuous attention and introspection. They too might degenerate into observances of certain external do's and don't's.

But perhaps humility differs from other observances in one respect. Truth, for instance, is cultivated positively by acting according to truth as one has realized it, and negatively by refraining from doing what is realized as untruth. In regard to humility, however, its positive practice might become just good manners or etiquette or even hypocrisy; it is cultivated by negative action, i.e. shedding of egotism; and it grows along with one's progressive realization and assimilation of truth. Assimilation of truth dissolves egotism and generates humility.

Bapu was truthful even before he became a votary of non-violence. Hence, humility came to him and grew in him very naturally. But as he himself has observed in the same chapter from which the above quotations have been taken (*From Yeravda Mandir*, Ch. XII):

"Humility should make the possessor *realize*, that he is as nothing. Directly we imagine ourselves to be something, there is egotism.... Only a little thought will suffice to convince us that all creatures are nothing more than a mere

atom in this universe....To feel that we are something is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God....True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity."

Wardha, 26-3-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

REAL COMMUNISM

Some months ago, I published an article by Shri M. P. T. Acharya (*Harijan*, 27-10-1951) in which he explained the difference between Communism and Bolshevism, (i.e. the system of Government prevailing in Russia). This has brought me a number of protests accusing Shri Acharya of presenting the Russian system in a distorted form. They say that the only purpose of calling it State-Capitalism can be to create the same aversion against it, as there is against Private Capitalism — the word Capitalism having become so unpopular in society. It is pointed out that even if Bolshevism is not Communism but State Capitalism, it is a far better economic order than that of Private Capitalism from the point of view of the masses. It has given them more food, clothes, education, comforts, leisure, security against calamities etc. It is government run in the interest of the many and not of a handful of men. Even if every peasant and worker is made a mere wage-earning labourer and deprived of freedom of thought, speech, work etc., he is well-fed and well-looked after. This never had happened before under Feudalism, Private Capitalism, or any other system. Hence, the Bolshevism or the Russian pattern of Communism must not be classed in the same category as Capitalism.

I think that the word State Capitalism is not an untruthful description of the Russian system. It is a technical term of Economics, and it is wrong to look upon a term itself with contempt. All the elements of Capitalism, such as ownership and control over means of production, interest, profits, rent, difference in wages and emoluments are present in both. Both need a heavy machinery of administrative staff, who do not produce anything themselves, but who control the producers and are better paid than the producers. Both the systems are brought into existence and maintained by violent means. In both, a large number of people are at the mercy of a few.

Communism is another technical term of economics. It is the administration of a community by a commune, — a *panchayat*, as we might call it in India. It is an order in which none of the elements of Capitalism are present. There is no centralization of government, of agriculture, industries, production, distribution etc.; no profits, rent, interest and commercialism. There is no administrative staff which does no productive labour itself and yet is handsomely maintained by the producers. It is a small community of self-governing people. It is not brought into existence and maintained by violence, but is a natural and voluntary association of a group of people living in close contact with one another.

That the Russian and the new Chinese Governments have considerably improved the material conditions of their poor masses within a short period of time is a compliment, which may not be withheld from them. But the spiritual and psychological side of the process must not be overlooked. Heartless violence has been its means. A part of Russia's economic order has been brought about by concentration camp labour on conditions similar to, if not worse than, slavery, or the *begar* or *veth* system of India, the indentured labour system of the Colonial Empires of Great Britain, France, Holland etc. China is still in making. We do not know what shape it will take in ten years' time. The present order might change beyond recognition.

One of the means of perpetuating a system is cutting a deep groove into the minds of the people by the enforced practice of a single track for a long period of time. People are not allowed any opportunity to learn or think for themselves. For instance, in India this was brought about by our caste system. The idea of the caste has been so deeply rooted in our blood, that for crores of people it has become impossible to accept any idea or reform, however reasonable or beneficial, if it could not be fitted into the caste psychology. On the other hand, even evils have been resignedly tolerated or thoughtlessly perpetuated under the spell of the caste. The Russian system seems to be treading the same path. Within a century or so, it might produce a nation as superstitiously clinging to the codes of Lenin, Stalin and their successors, as we do to what might be put before us as the injunctions of customs, *shastras* or castes.

Of course, the human mind does ultimately protest against such bondage. Rebellious spirits always rise in revolt. But a revolt means a long period of suffering and martyrdom. For instance, from the time of Buddha and Mahavir to Vallabhacharya and so many reformers and sect-founders of less renown, a strong or mild protest against the narrowness of Smritis has constantly been raised. And yet we are not out of the wood yet. So the rebellious spirit of the Russian nation will rise against its present order sooner or later. But what price it will have to pay in terms of suffering, it is difficult to forecast.

It is suggested that Communism will evolve out of the present Bolshevic order in course of time. Perhaps, it will. But it will not be brought about by the Bolshevists themselves, but by rebels against them. And these rebels will be put down ruthlessly by the Bolshevist

Government as long as possible. If the new rebels too will resort to violence in the belief that it is a shorter route, they too will establish anything but true Communism.

This is what Shri M. P. T. Acharya has sought to establish in his article. If we can learn one great lesson from the experience of ages that no lasting good can and has been achieved through violence, and that even for the vast radical changes in society we must seek a non-violent method, a method based on voluntary sacrifice and love for humanity, we shall bring Sarvodaya more assuredly than can be expected through the mightiest of bloody revolutions. At the same time, nothing can be achieved by those whose non-violence means merely non-activity and complacency and reluctance to change their established course of life.

Bombay, 5-2-'52 K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE PAWAYA CONFERENCE — II

The workers' meeting in the evening was marked by questions and answers. A friend wanted to know what attraction could the movement have for a political worker like him.

Vinoba answered : The politics of India were different from that of other countries. The Indian people formed a composite society made up of divers elements. Our problems were, therefore, peculiar and we must evolve appropriate means for resolving them. Lack of unity and scorn for labour have been the bane of our life throughout history. These were the cause of our subjugation by foreigners. The *Bhoodan-Yajna* attacked both these weaknesses at the root. It would raise the dignity of labour as well as of the labourer. All parties were agreed that land should be provided to the poor ; the difference of opinion came in only as to the way it should be done. Vinoba held that if we could solve the land problem through the power of non-violence we would have shown to the world a new way, which could be universally adopted for resolving conflicts.

The question was how long, after all, should we continue to be frightened of one another. India feared Pakistan, and Pakistan feared India. Similarly America and Russia were afraid of each other. The fear caused a preponderant and a wholly disproportionate share of the revenue of each country to be wasted on armaments. Economically, we were not in a position to bear these heavy expenses. Ultimately the expenditure would land India in political subordination, if not loss of freedom. We must therefore create the power of non-violence.

Hence, Vinoba said, during his tour, whenever he referred to the elections, he did not use the term "fighting the election battle", but "playing the election game."

If the leaders ran down one another, they appeared before the public in the role of vilifiers and the people lost faith and respect for every one of them. He therefore held that the policies and programmes which affect the larger life of the nation should be framed and worked out with the unanimous consent of all parties. For example, had demand for the separate Andhra province been satisfactorily decided, the present complications would not have arisen. Bombay was a similar problem. Vinoba was of opinion that all these problems should be solved by arbitration and internal unity must be preserved. There should be no conflict of interest between the cities and the villages, and there should be co-operation between political and social workers of different parties. This was the need to which the politics of our country should be addressed. Gandhiji was a good politician, because he was able to achieve such unity — even if, for a short period only.

Poverty

In answer to another question, Vinoba said, he did not assert that the solution of the land-problem would automatically solve the entire problem of our poverty. Along with the movement for land-gifts, they would have to promote village industries also. The villages should be able to fulfil their prime necessities locally. They must stop the entry of mechanically manufactured goods into the villages. Then only could they give full employment to the villagers. For that they should plan our economic development programme on the basis of decentralization, that is, with the village as a self-sufficient economic unit. Otherwise, they would have to continue to look helplessly to the centre for all their needs. The centre should be strong not materially, but morally.

Yarn Offerings

Speaking about yarn-offerings, Vinoba said that there were eighteen crores voters in the country. We should be able to collect more than that number of hanks, to spread the Gandhian teaching. It meant that we would need in every village at least one person who accepted non-violence and tackled things from that view-point. He had an ambition that he should be able to bring all the parties together for this purpose.

The Conference considered how best they could step up the work of *Bhoodan-Yajna* and decided to divide the *pradesh* into seven regional parts. Supervisors, one for each post, were appointed to look after the work. It was also decided to open a central office of *Bhoodan* work for the whole *pradesh* at Lucknow. Shri Kapilbhai has been placed in charge of the office which will be housed in Gandhi Ashram, Hajarat Ganj, Lucknow.

(From the original in Hindi) D. M.

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MINISTER OF HEALTH

Sir,

In your footnote to my letter of protest against the appointment of a doctor as Health Minister (*Harijan*, 15-3-1952) you say regarding the qualifications of the Health Minister that he should possess the qualification of being in good health and that he does not use drugs (and filthy vaccines). In this connection I beg to say that I possess all the qualifications which you say are necessary for a Health Minister to possess and have. I was vaccinated only in infancy when being a helpless infant I could not resist it. I have not been vaccinated nor inoculated for more than sixty years at least nor have I drunk doctors' medicine nor taken the wretched injections into my body for more than fifty years at least. I am now 72 years old and enjoy good health simply by observing laws of good health described in Gandhiji's book *A Key to Health* and in Dr. John Kellogg's book *How to have good health* — such as eating in moderation, omitting a meal when I am not hungry, daily moderate walking exercise at seashore, cleanliness, no worry etc. Those who do not know me say that I look only 60 years old and not 72 years of age which is my real age. Thus I possess all the qualifications which you say a health minister should have. I therefore request you to please recommend me as the fittest person to be the Health Minister of Bombay through columns of *Harijan* to the Chief Minister of Bombay. As I have sufficient (small) income of my own I will not ask for any salary as Health Minister. It is true that at the general election recently held, I was not a candidate but it is certain that my work as Health Minister for the next five years for the good of people's health will be quite satisfactory to the people of Bombay province who will at the next General Election in 1957 certainly elect me as M.L.A. and approve of the Prime Minister appointing me as Health Minister now. I, therefore, again request you to recommend me in *Harijan* as fittest person now to be appointed Health Minister of Bombay. Medical qualifications are not necessary because cleanliness and sanitation alone are true preventives of diseases.

Yours faithfully,
Sorabji R. Mistri

PS. I say as Mr Lincoln said:

If I am elected I shall be thankful; if not, it's all the same.

[*Note*: I am willing to recommend. I do think he is well qualified. But under the present system unless Shri Mistri joins the Congress, is willing to accept joint responsibility in the Cabinet, is accepted as a fit candidate by the Party, and elected by the people within six months of his appointment, the Chief Minister will turn down my recommendation as unpractical and a joke. So, on the whole, it is best to make of Lincoln's advice a virtue of necessity. I do hope that without any burden of office, Shri Mistri is able to work in his own locality as a true minister of health. I also feel that there is something wrong in the set-up of our governments, that the society is not always able to make the best use of its fit citizens.

Wardha, 17-3-'52 K. G. M.]

NOTES

Turn to Villages

We have until a little while ago concentrated over work in cities and we have arranged our plans according to the needs of cities. We have to reverse the process now. The cities are capable of taking care of themselves. It is the villages we have to turn to. We have to disabuse them of their prejudices, their superstitions, their narrow outlook and we can do so in no other manner than that of staying amongst them and sharing their joys and sorrows and spreading education and intelligent information amongst them. Let this institution draw a larger number of men to dedicate themselves to the service of their province.

(Extract from Mahatma Gandhi's address before Parsi Rajkiya Mandal, *Young India*, 30-4-1931)

M. D.

Ahimsa Week

The Ahimsa Movement organized by us on a minute scale in 1925 has made gradual progress during the last 27 years. At the request of Miss Margaret E. Ford, Hon. Secretary, World League Against Vivisection, London, we celebrated the World Animal Day during the last four years. Meat-stalls at several places were closed on October 4th since 1948 and the Animal Day celebrations last year were an unprecedented success.

As this movement is universal and it is neither political nor sectarian, we request all to co-operate with us in observing the Ahimsa Week, which falls on the first week of May every year. The following three precepts have to be observed during the week.

1. To abstain from killing,
2. To take only vegetarian diet,
3. To give rest to animals from 11-30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and to abstain from travelling in vehicles drawn by animals during that time.

The co-operation of priests and teachers of all religions and associations is earnestly invited to make this movement a success.

Panadura, Ceylon

W. S. FERNANDO,
Principal,
Universal College

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